

During my first visit 15 years ago to Bulgaria with the International Republican Institute, I witnessed a dying Communist State frozen in time. Today, Bulgaria is a valued member of NATO and soon to be admitted to the EU.

The Bulgarian people are proving themselves to be courageous and capable to meet the challenges of political, defense and economic transformation.

I want to thank my hosts Tuesday of the enthusiastic economic team of Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburgi Gotha, Foreign Minister Solomon Passy and President Georgi Purvanov. Also, America is well represented in Bulgaria by Ambassador Jim Pardew and his gracious wife Kathy.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

DEMOCRATS WILL FIGHT REPUBLICAN ABUSE OF POWER IN SENATE

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, the congressional Republican abuses of power continue in the Senate where Senator FRIST is preparing to change the Senate rules for the first time in 200 years.

Senator FRIST and Senate Republicans are waging an unprecedented political power grab. They are changing the rules in the middle of the game and attacking our historic system of checks and balances so they can ram through a small number of judicial nominees who otherwise cannot achieve consensus because of their poor record of protecting individual rights.

Our House Democrats join our colleagues in the Senate committed to fight this Republican abuse of power. We will protect the role of the judiciary as the guardian of the rights of all Americans, assuring that all judges who are confirmed in the Federal courts be as intellectually honest and fair as possible, rather than ruling just on one side of one interest.

Drunken with power, rewriting the rules is what has been happening in Washington the most in recent years. The House Republican leadership tried to weaken the House ethics rules to protect one of their own, and they failed. Let us not let the Senate do the same.

CONGRATULATING ELEVENTH DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in praise of three very impressive schools in my district, Columbus High School, LaGrange High School, and Campbell High School, which were selected by Newsweek magazine among the top high schools in America.

To have three Eleventh District schools included on this prestigious list speaks to the dedication and accomplishments of our district's educators, students, and community members.

As the former chairman of the Marietta City School Board, I know the great work that goes on in our school districts. I am glad the rest of the Nation finally knows about it as well.

LaGrange High School has a long tradition of providing students with the kind of education that truly helps our children succeed in life.

Columbus High School traces its history back to the 1890s, so it is no wonder the school is a perennial education all-star; practice makes perfect.

Campbell High School has upheld the standard of excellence in Cobb County for years, its teachers, staff, and students showing a relentless ambition for achievement, and, just last week, hosted our Vice President for a discussion on Social Security.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating these schools.

AMERICAN PEOPLE SUPPORT FILIBUSTER

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to stress that the protection of the filibuster is something that the American people support.

I heard one of my colleagues just a few minutes ago talk about the New Jersey filibuster which is down here at the Mall with a group of people who are trying to make the point that we must protect the filibuster. We should not repeal it as the Republicans want to do, because it does protect minority rights. It protects individual freedoms in terms of making sure that justices and judges that are appointed are those that have a consensus.

I want to say that, in my State, it is not just the people involved in the New Jersey filibuster; a lot of other people have expressed their concern on this issue. Just a week or two ago, I was at Princeton University outside the Frist Student Center, and the students there at Princeton University were conducting a 24-hour filibuster which went on for almost 2 weeks, I think it may still be going on, because they felt so strongly about this issue. They feel strongly about it because it has been around for so long. It is over 200 years now that the Senate rules have provided for a filibuster, and that is what our Founding Fathers wanted, because they did not want an abuse of power. They did not want the majority to be the absolute rule.

PRaising AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to praise America's small business owners. They really are our Nation's economic engine, and these small business owners and our Nation's employers are doing a great job with this free enterprise system that we enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, there is good news about the economy that is out. In April, this economy created 274,000 new jobs. Also in April, we saw that retail sales exceeded projections. We thought we would have a .7 percent retail sales growth; in fact, we had a 1.4 percent retail sales growth.

Mr. Speaker, it just shows that manufacturing numbers are up. Capital investment is up. Manufacturing investment and output is up. The economy is at work, and it is working for America's families.

America's small businesses are doing their job, and I salute those small business owners.

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FOR U.S. ECONOMY

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, thankfully, there have been a couple of bright spots over the past week in the economy. April was just the sixth month during this administration in which at least 250,000 jobs were created, a welcome relief for this struggling economy. Meanwhile, the trade deficit in March decreased from its record high level in February, though it is still on pace to become a record year, the highest trade deficit in the history of our country.

Still, the positive news on the economy is often accompanied by equally troubling news. New statistics show that each paycheck American workers take home ends up buying less and less. The prices of many basic goods from gas to milk have shot up, but workers' wages have not kept pace. Americans are working hard and producing more, but they are not seeing the benefits in their buying power. This is terrible news for America's families. We have to have those wages at least keep pace with inflation.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1544, FASTER AND SMARTER FUNDING FOR FIRST RESPONDERS ACT OF 2005

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 269 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 269

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1544) to provide faster and smarter funding for first responders, and for other purposes. The first

reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Homeland Security. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Homeland Security now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommend with or without instructions.

□ 1030

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM). The gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MATSUI), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this rule and the underlying legislation, H.R. 1544, the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005. This bill sponsored by my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), has the support of 40 bipartisan co-sponsors and was accepted at both its subcommittee and full committee markups with unanimous consent of the majority and minority membership of the new Select Committee on Homeland Security.

The goal of this bipartisan legislation is simple: to reform the way the Department of Homeland Security issues terrorism preparedness grants to States and local governments so they can prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism. It also expedites the delivery of Federal assistance to first responders, those

brave men and women who are our first line of defense against terrorism, where it is needed most while also endorsing undisciplined spending on the homeland security front.

This legislation also reflects an agreement among policymakers here in the House: first of all, on the need to award Federal terrorism preparedness grants on the basis of risk; on the importance of ensuring that such grants are spent in a timely manner; and on the necessity of ensuring collaboration between neighboring jurisdictions.

As Members of Congress, we have seen all too clearly the problems associated with coordinating the effective and efficient allocation of these new funds to fight and defend against acts of terrorism on our shores. Since 2001, the Federal Government has made roughly \$30 billion available in grant funding for this purpose, but approximately \$4.1 billion awarded by the Department of Homeland Security still remains in the pipeline, unspent, along with another \$2.4 billion recently added from 2005.

This bottleneck in getting our first responders the funds that they need to protect our safety is unacceptable, and this legislation will get these terrorism preparedness funds into the hands of those who need it most, by ensuring that guarantee that no State or territory falls below a certain base level of funding while also ensuring that States prioritize their own anti-terrorism spending on the basis of risk and need.

By providing financial encouragements to States that pass through their awarded funds to localities within tight timeframes, this legislation makes our funding for such programs faster. And by allocating grant awards to States and regions based on an assessment of risk and need to achieve clear and measurable preparedness goals, this legislation also makes our funding for such programs smarter.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1544 fulfills the recommendations included in the 9/11 Commission report, and recognizes the fundamental reality that terrorists are not arbitrary in selecting their targets, so we cannot be arbitrary in our efforts to protect our Nation. By streamlining the grant process and giving States and regions the tools that they need to develop specific flexible and measurable goals, this bill will make sure that every Federal dollar allocated for the purpose of defending our security is used effectively and efficiently.

I encourage all my colleagues to support this rule and the underlying legislation which brings a risk-based approach to addressing our country's most pressing homeland security needs.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

(Ms. MATSUI asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, today we will debate bipartisan legislation from the Select Committee on Homeland Security to improve funding for first responders.

In this new post-9/11 era, ensuring that our country is protecting itself from attack is of prime importance. I am especially proud of the efforts of my hometown of Sacramento. Federal officials have recently highlighted Sacramento as an example to other localities of how to efficiently spend Federal anti-terrorism dollars.

Already, Sacramento's main agencies tasked for homeland security, police, sheriff, health and the city and metro fire departments, are all coordinating their efforts.

The five agencies have already agreed to share all of the homeland security dollars, a unique show of cooperation when limited funding is at stake. Not only have the agencies standardized protective suits and gas masks, but a massive 9,000 emergency personnel training effort is under way. With all of Sacramento's hard work, I am not surprised that Federal officials are singling their efforts out.

What we are doing today will help these first responders in their work. Currently, base funding for homeland security assistance programs is distributed among the States according to a strict formula. This formula has resulted in greater funding going to lower-risk States like Wyoming on a per capita basis rather than more at-risk States like New York and my home State of California.

This bill would alter the funding allocation to States based on threat and risk. However, each State would be guaranteed a minimum if its dollar amount fell below a specified level. Even the 9/11 Commission recommends that Federal dollars supplement State and local efforts that fall in higher-risk areas. This is a commonsense proposal.

I am pleased that this reform will greatly benefit California and my hometown of Sacramento. Further, this bill continues Federal support for the Urban Area Security Initiative, which Sacramento has received funding through, in addition to other Federal grant programs.

H.R. 1544 also recognizes the increased risk to our region posed by our flood control systems by specifically including dams in its list of critical infrastructure. Its inclusion will allow consideration of flood control levees and dams as a factor in determining the risk a community faces.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ranking member, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), for highlighting this issue of great concern to both our districts. Our communities are faced with a continuing risk of flooding. Sacramento's flood risk is among the highest of

major urban areas in the country. Located at the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers, the Sacramento floodplain is the hub of a 6-county regional economy that provides 800,000 jobs for 1.5 million people. A major flood along the American River would cripple this economy, cause between 7 and \$16 billion in direct property damages, and likely result in significant loss of life.

While we typically view the levee system as our first line of defense against Mother Nature's raging storms, we must also face the reality that this critical infrastructure must be protected from terrorist attack. A major levee failure or a terrorist attack at the dam upstream would be absolutely devastating to the region.

The addition of this provision by the Select Committee on Homeland Security shows why amendments and increased discussion of this bill are so important. And I am glad to see that the Committee on Rules did make in order a few of the amendments that were brought before our committee. But I must express my disappointment that this bill will not be debated today under a more open process. I believe that there are a number of other amendments that, while we may disagree on the position, they are worth continued debate on the House floor.

For example, while the Select Committee on Homeland Security explored the issue of whether all first responder grants should be awarded strictly on the basis of risk, doing away altogether with State minimum award requirements, I think there are a number of Members that would like to see this issue debated before the full House.

Even the gentleman from California (Mr. Cox) acknowledged that while he personally would like to see all first responder funding allocated by risk, the issue of ensuring each State receives a minimum was an important compromise in his committee. An amendment addressing this exact issue was brought before the Committee on Rules, but it was not made in order.

I strongly support the underlying bill, and I am pleased it was reported out in bipartisan fashion. I commend the Select Committee on Homeland Security for their extensive debates on the best strategies to improve the funding streams for our first responders. I imagine there are many divergent opinions on this matter, and it would be excellent debate for us to have had here today. It is unfortunate the Committee on Rules did not open this rule so we could continue this full dialogue today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS). Mr. Speaker, one of the advantages of having a great bipartisan bill means that we have good leadership in the Select Committee on Homeland Security, and today I am very pleased for one of our bright new

young Members to be with us. He is the chairman for the Subcommittee on Management, Integration, and Oversight.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 269. This rule would provide for the consideration of H.R. 1544, the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005.

In the years since 9/11, our Nation has spent billions of dollars to strengthen our firefighters, police, and emergency personnel. These hard-working Americans known as our first responders are the frontlines of our Nation's homeland defense. They keep our communities safe, and they respond when disaster strikes.

The bill we will be debating today is a good piece of legislation and is designed with our first responders in mind. It does several things. First, it reforms the grant funding system that most States, including my home State of Alabama, believe is ineffective.

For example, a 2004 committee report found that nearly 85 percent of the grants distributed to States have not yet been utilized. And because current law requires a minimal level of funding given to States, many States receive a lump sum of money from DHS without a clear understanding of how to spend it.

□ 1045

Three-and-a-half years after 9/11 I find this unacceptable. Yet these facts speak to the need for a bipartisan reform which will ensure taxpayers know what they are getting.

Second, H.R. 1544 helps the Federal Government allocate first responder funding based on actual risk. Under this legislation, States like Alabama would be required to submit an annual State homeland security plan to the Federal Government. This plan would outline the State's projected risks to 16 economic sectors, such as agriculture, the number of military bases and its transportation infrastructure. States meeting these risk criteria would be eligible for a greater funding.

For our rural areas, this could mean new funding sources. For example, States like Alabama could see increased funding for agro-terror initiatives. States with a heavy military industrial base could receive additional assistance to protect communities near bases, and of course, ports like Mobile would continue to receive much-needed support for cargo security initiatives.

I do want to acknowledge that H.R. 1544 changes the minimum level of guaranteed funding to each State, and while some of my colleagues have called this a cut, I like to think of it as better use of limited homeland security dollars.

We all know of instances where the Federal Government funds State projects which, in reality, have little

or nothing to do with securing our homeland. This bill will help correct that situation.

I also want to make clear what this bill does not do. Essential programs like FIRE grants, COPS, grants bullet-proof vests funding, or secure school initiatives for local police are not affected. These programs have provided rural areas, like my district, with millions of dollars for new safety equipment and vehicles, and I will continue to do my part to ensure they are fully funded each year.

H.R. 1544 is bipartisan, both in spirit and intent. Every Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, both Republicans and Democrats, have signed on to this bill as original cosponsors, and the committee reported it out by a unanimous voice vote.

The bill also closely resembles the 9/11 reform legislation passed by the House during the 108th Congress and has been endorsed by the 9/11 Commission and a majority of first responder groups nationwide.

I am pleased to support this legislation and ask for support of this rule so the House can consider it today.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Chairman Cox) for his ongoing efforts to advance this legislation.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ).

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from California for yielding me this time.

On September 11, more than 700 of our friends and neighbors from my State of New Jersey never returned home from work and never returned to their families. The smoking ruins of the Twin Towers were visible for my entire district to see, and many of the police and emergency response personnel that responded so heroically to the attacks were from New Jersey.

Yet, here we are 3 years and 8 months later and our current homeland security funding is not based on risk and threats. That is why I rise in strong support of this important legislation which will finally direct Federal assistance to those first responders serving where the need is greatest. We know the enemy seeks to attack again. We just do not know when and where it will occur.

New Jersey faces unique terrorism threats that require a greater portion of homeland security aid due to its proximity to New York City and to its vast number of potential targets of terror, such as the largest seaport on the east coast, one of the busiest airports in the country, an area known as the "chemical coastway," our four nuclear power plants, and the six tunnels and bridges that connect New Jersey to New York City.

If that were not enough, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has placed more than a dozen New Jersey sites on

the National Critical Infrastructure List and has called the area in my district between Port Newark and Newark International Airport the most dangerous 2 miles in the United States when it comes to terrorism. A recent article in the New York Times pointed out that this 2-mile area provides a "convenient way to cripple the economy by disrupting major portions of the country's rail lines, oil storage tanks and refineries, pipelines, air traffic, communications networks and highway system."

Yet the State's homeland security funding was cut in this fiscal year by 34 percent. In my district, two high-risk urban areas saw their funding reduced by 17 and 60 percent respectively. Mr. Speaker, the current system of allocating homeland security funds is broken and needs to be fixed immediately.

The 9/11 Commission report said that, "Homeland security assistance should be based strictly on an assessment of risks and vulnerabilities." That is exactly what the Menendez substitute to the intelligence reform bill would have accomplished last October. That is exactly what I fought for in the conference report on that legislation and what I sought to accomplish earlier this year when I introduced the Risk-Based Homeland Security Funding Act with Senators CORZINE and LAUTENBERG.

We must take every step to secure our communities from the threat of terrorism, and this bill will ensure that the first responders on the front lines of this war in both New Jersey and across the country will receive a much-needed increase in Federal homeland security funding.

The House of Representatives must pass this important piece of legislation today, and the Senate should act as quickly as possible to get it to the President's desk.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill. It will turn the 9/11 Commission's recommendation into law, while protecting those areas and targets that are at the greatest risk of a future attack.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), the subcommittee chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management for the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good and fair rule that provides ample time to discuss this very, very important issue. I urge my colleagues to support the rule and to support the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to applaud the gentleman from California's (Chairman COX) commitment to first responders and for developing a bill that better prepares our Nation for terrorism.

Since before the terrorist attacks of September 11, experts from across the political spectrum have urged these kinds of reforms that are in this bill. These improvements include clear preparedness standards to guide State expenditures, mutual aid agreements, interoperable equipment and better planning and coordination between first responders at all levels of government.

I also want to applaud the gentleman from California (Chairman COX) for his willingness to carry this bill forward in an open and fair process.

As the chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management, I can say with confidence that we have a stronger bill today because of the efforts of the gentleman from California (Chairman COX) and the gentleman from Alaska (Chairman YOUNG).

I particularly want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) for working with the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to incorporate two important principles throughout this bill: a commitment to the Nation's all hazards emergency system and minimum funding for all States.

We must remember that first responders have to deal with all kinds of disasters, regardless of the cause, and that our first responder programs must address terrorism in that context. There are no terrorism fire stations in this country. Firefighters respond to everything. The COX bill recognizes this and ensures that terrorism preparedness is fully compatible with our existing all hazards system.

The second principle acknowledges that every State must have basic response capabilities. I come from a State with two very large metropolitan areas, but I recognize that terrorists can attack outside of these big cities.

Furthermore, if there is a catastrophic attack in a large urban area, local response agencies will be overwhelmed and will require assistance from units across this country, suburban areas as well as rural areas. These units will need proper equipment and training to effectively integrate into a large-scale disaster response.

States need a guaranteed minimum level of funding to meet both these requirements.

I would again like to commend the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) for his hard work and leadership and urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bill.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time, and I rise in support of the rule on H.R. 1544.

It has been 3 years and 8 months since 9/11. I thank my colleagues for coming together and being so unified in

helping New York during that very tragic period, and I thank very much the leadership of the gentleman from California (Chairman COX) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Ranking Member THOMPSON) on the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act.

This is not a perfect bill but it does fundamentally change the way we distribute homeland security grants for first responders.

This bill will distribute all homeland security funding on the basis of risk, rather than thinly spreading it around the country, with absolutely no standards, no basis for risk and absolutely no justification as to how the money was to be spent.

While the Department of Homeland Security has always had the authority to distribute the majority of homeland security funding on the basis of risk, they have never done so. Previously, heavily populated States and heavily threatened or high-threat States like New York only received about \$4 per capita, while other States, like Wyoming, received close to \$28 per person. What might have been even worse is that States were not required previously to justify need or to justify how they were spending the money. They just got a check. We had no standards, and we had no way of knowing what level of preparedness we had in this country in our various localities and States.

This bill should be the end of this and hopefully the end of troubling press reports of mis-spent homeland security funding.

While I would have liked to have seen a bill with no State minimums, because I do not support funding homeland security projects without first determining a need, I understand the delicate negotiations that went into this bill. Again, this bill is not perfect but a much better way of protecting our country, and that is why I am supporting it.

Like many of my colleagues, I will be watching the way the funding is distributed to make sure that the promise of this bill is fulfilled and that it is directed where the need is in our country to protect our citizens.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN).

(Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the rule and of H.R. 1544. I commend the gentleman from California (Chairman COX) and his committee for their great work on this essential legislation.

This legislation is an issue of great importance for our Nation, but it is also a huge priority for New Jersey, which lost, as the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) said, 700 residents on September 11, 2001.

The 9/11 Commission recommendations rightly stated: "Homeland security assistance should be based strictly on an assessment of risks and vulnerabilities. Federal homeland security assistance should not remain a program for general revenue sharing. It should supplement State and local resources based on the risks or vulnerabilities that merit additional support. Congress should not use this money as a pork barrel."

Both the President in his budget and, most recently, the Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security in their bill just passed out of full committee have echoed this important recommendation.

Since September 11, 2001, U.S. intelligence reports that our New York-New Jersey region is still among the most attractive targets for terrorists. For all of our critical infrastructure of the trans-Hudson tunnels, airports, seaports, oil refineries, chemical manufacturing, population density, financial centers in both lower Manhattan and in Jersey City, our basic close relationship with New York City, anti-terrorism experts continue to acknowledge that the risk of terrorism remains.

Yet, despite the best efforts of the President, homeland security officials and Members of Congress, these security funds continue to be distributed to States based on population, rather than risk and vulnerability. That is why this bill needs to be passed in its present form.

Fortunately, the legislation addresses our concerns and follows the Commission's recommendations. We are sending more Federal homeland security to States like New Jersey and other high-threat areas where risk is greatest and critical infrastructure must be better protected against terrorism.

H.R. 1544 establishes a more rational approach to distributing homeland security funding by sending more resources to where they are needed. As we learned on September 11, terrorists do not arbitrarily select their targets. Therefore, homeland security funding cannot be arbitrarily distributed.

This legislation would ensure that homeland security grants are awarded according to an assessment of risk and vulnerability, not just population.

For these and many other reasons, Mr. Speaker, this bill and this rule needs to be supported.

□ 1100

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS).

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act. In the post-September 11, 2001, world that we live in, it is clear we need a more effective approach to funding our first

responders. Terrorists are targeting high-profile targets in our major metropolitan areas, and we must ensure we have the funds they need.

The 9/11 Commission, which I strongly supported, recommended we allocate grant funding based on risk, not politics. This bipartisan legislation does just that. It goes where it is most needed. I cannot tell you if my State of Connecticut gains funds or loses funds under this bill, but that cannot be the issue. The question is: Are funds going where we have the greatest risk? And the answer to that question is: Yes. We are following the 9/11 Commission recommendation. It is going where we have the greatest need.

H.R. 1544 will distribute first responder grants based on threat, vulnerability, and consequences of a terrorist attack to persons and critical infrastructure sectors throughout the United States. This will allow streamlining terrorism preparedness grants to our first responders who, again, need it most.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations, I know this legislation allocating these resources based on risk is essential to my communities, my State, and our Nation. H.R. 1544 is an important step towards enhancing our Nation's response to terrorist attacks.

The bottom line is, it is not a question of if, but of when terrorists will strike again. The legislation is essential because it helps ensure that when they do, our first responders, who need the resources the most, will be better able to protect the communities they serve.

Congratulations to the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), and to the Members on both sides of the aisle who have worked in a bipartisan manner to make our Nation safer.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), one of our bright new young Members.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the rule and H.R. 1544, the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005.

Mr. Speaker, it is said that in this country politics end at the water's edge. This is certainly the case with this legislation. The Select Committee on Homeland Security, on which I serve, passed this bill unanimously. This occurred because the idea behind the legislation is a bipartisan one: combat the threat of terrorism at home by directing funds to those localities that are most at risk for terrorist attack.

The idea that funding should be based on risk and security rather than on political concerns is one that reso-

nates on both sides of the aisle of this great Chamber. The Members of this body recognize that the challenges we face are unique in our history. No previous generation has had to combat the threat to the homeland that we face right now.

Today's terrorists are determined to wage war against us not on some overseas battlefield, but in our cities, ports, and transportation hubs. This is why this bill is so important. It makes sure that we take into account threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences of attack as we decide how to best spend our anti-terrorism dollars.

This bill is also necessary because it confronts the issue of threats to the homeland head on. It directs appropriate State authorities to come up with a comprehensive homeland security plan tied to the achievement, maintenance, and enhancement of the essential capabilities established by the Department of Homeland Security.

In developing those essential capabilities, the Department is required to seek the input of those on the frontlines: local police; fire departments; and EMS units, emergency medical service units. This provision is vital because combating terrorism is a nationwide problem that calls for cooperation between officials at the local, State, and Federal levels.

Finally, the bill requires the Department to set national standards for first responder equipment and training so that all frontline units responding to a terrorist attack will be able to operate effectively.

The Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005 is an important tool for safeguarding the homeland. It is a positive step towards development of an effective homeland security policy, and I support it wholeheartedly.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the very distinguished gentleman from Nevada (Mr. GIBBONS), a young man who was on the frontline, a captain, a pilot in the United States Air Force, who served during the Persian Gulf War and who is a Member of Congress, serving since the 104th Congress. And while this country has great respect for the men and women who are on the frontlines defending our country in the United States military today, we also remember back to those first men and women of the military during the Persian Gulf War who were standing ready not only to protect this country, but also to liberate others and to provide freedom.

Mr. GIBBONS. Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), my friend and colleague, for that generous introduction; and I rise today, Mr. Speaker, in support of both the rule and the overall bill, H.R. 1544, the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005.

As a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, I am

proud to be an original cosponsor of this bipartisan bill; and I congratulate the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), for their diligent work on this act.

This bipartisan bill will help expedite the homeland security grant process and ensure that money gets to those who need it the most, our first responders. Importantly for my State, the State of Nevada, this bill will allow the Department of Homeland Security to take into account both resident and tourist populations when determining a State's funding for terrorism preparedness.

My fellow Nevadans know that tourism is a significant part of our State's industry and our population. On any given day of the year, Nevada hosts hundreds of thousands of tourists from across the country and around the world. Las Vegas Boulevard, Mr. Speaker, has more hotel rooms than any other city in the world. According to Nevada's Commission on Tourism, Nevada welcomed over 50 million tourists alone just last year.

Prior to this bill, terrorism preparedness grant funding did not take tourism into consideration in determining a State's population. Yet Nevada's first responders were and remain responsible for protecting everyone, residents and visitors, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To ignore the tourism population in determining a State's level of risk simply ignores a large population within a potential terrorist target.

The First Responders Act of 2005 will help States with large tourism populations, like Nevada, receive a more equitable allocation of tourism preparedness funds. H.R. 1544 is a step in the right direction and, in fact, should stand as a model for all homeland security grants. More homeland security programs beyond just the terrorism preparedness grants should also take into account tourism populations.

As we move forward in strengthening our homeland security, I look forward to achieving this goal and to providing our first responders with the critical resources they need to protect the people of this country. I urge my colleagues to support this landmark legislation, and I once again congratulate the chairman and I congratulate my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), for their hard work on this effort.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am very, very pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), the young chairman of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, a very distinguished Member of Congress, and a man who has worked very diligently not only on a bipartisan basis with the minority, but also with the Speaker and in particular with the Committee on Rules as we went about

preparing this important piece of legislation to ensure its success. So I am very, very proud of the chairman from Orange County, California (Mr. COX).

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS), my older brother, for all the work that he did.

Really, in all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the gentleman from Texas, who, as a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security for 2 years was instrumental in writing this legislation; who, as a Member of the Committee on Rules in the 109th Congress, has been appointed by the chairman as liaison to the Select Committee on Homeland Security and has made possible the process by which we will consider this bill on the floor today.

In fact, it really merits pointing out today that the Committee on Rules of the House of Representatives has played a special role in the establishment of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, for which this is the first major legislative effort on the floor this year.

In the last Congress, not only the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) but also the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER); the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART), who is the chairman of the Subcommittee on Rules of the Select Committee on Homeland Security; the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER), chairman of the full Committee on Rules; the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER), who is now chairman of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Nuclear and Biological Attack of the Select Committee on Homeland Security; and Porter Goss of Florida, who is now the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, all were Members of the Select Committee on Homeland Security in the last Congress and also Members of the Committee on Rules that worked to change the jurisdiction of the House of Representatives to make sure we would have a focus on this critical national priority that both President Bush and the leaders of this Congress have recognized as so important that we have reorganized the entire executive branch and now the legislative branch of government. That is the process by which this rule and the bill that it outlines are coming to the floor today.

Since September 11, over \$30 billion in terrorism preparedness funding has gone from the Federal Government to State and local governments. In this year's budget, President Bush has added to the annual amount an incremental \$2 billion more. That will mean that we have had an increase in annual spending on terrorism preparedness for States and localities since 9/11 of over 2,000 percent. The question is not whether we are putting enough money into terrorism preparedness for our first responders. The question is whether the money is making it to the frontlines. And the answer to that is,

no, it is not. And the question is also whether it is being spent properly, in a way that makes us more prepared. And, unfortunately, the answer to that question is, not always.

There are opportunities for major improvement, and that is what this bill is all about. It is called the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responder Act because it solves both those problems. It will get the money to the frontlines faster, and it will make sure that we are spending the money based on what we know from our intelligence about terrorist threats and capabilities, our own vulnerabilities, and the consequences of terrorist attacks.

I strongly support this rule and look forward to passage of the bill later today.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, on September 11, 4 years ago, fanatic Islamic terrorists attacked our country, hijacked our planes, rammed the Pentagon, and destroyed the World Trade Center that was located in my district. This is deadly serious business, and we do not have a dime to waste. This bill, while certainly an improvement over current law, still includes State-based formula funding.

I offered an amendment to eliminate the State minimum section of the bill to ensure that all homeland security funding is distributed on the basis of risk. Unfortunately, that amendment was not made in order by this restrictive rule. I am saddened that there are still people in this House who still do not get it. How many times do we have to run for our lives before we realize this is not a game? We face the serious threat of terrorism, and we should allocate the homeland security funding based on that threat.

□ 1115

I understand this bill is a delicate political compromise. On the whole, I support it because it is better than current law. But we can do better.

State minimums waste homeland security funding. This bill would give States money that cannot be justified on the basis of the risk, wasting precious resources that should be used to protect the American people from real dangers in other States.

In this wonderful, open, rich, free society in which we live, there are plenty of real targets that need protecting all across America. The issue of State minimums is not just about New York. If there are real threats to our food supply, our energy resources, our national monuments, they should all be protected. But we should not give more money to States who cannot demonstrate a need while we know there are other States that have needs that cannot be met. It just does not make sense.

The bipartisan 9/11 Commission recommended that anti-terrorism funding be distributed based on risk and not based on State formulas or pork-barrel spending. We should follow their excellent advice. The State minimum provision in this bill is in direct violation of the 9/11 Commission recommendations. In its report, it said that, Homeland security assistance should be based strictly on an assessment of risks and vulnerabilities." The commission went on to say that "Federal homeland security assistance should not remain a program for general revenue sharing. It should supplement State and local resources based on the risks and vulnerabilities that merit additional support. Congress should not use this money as pork barrel."

My amendment would have stricken these State minimums and distributed these grants in a manner that addresses the highest priority threats and vulnerabilities of the Nation. There are very real and known terrorist threats against specific targets in the country, and these homeland security grant programs were created specifically to address these threats. Distributing terrorism response funding without regard to risk is not wise. It is not cost effective. It is not in the best interests of our country's security. These resources should go where they are needed, where there is the greatest threat of terrorism. Period.

As noted in the 9/11 Commission's report, "Those who would allocate money on a different basis should then defend their view of the national interest." I had hoped that the Rules Committee would have followed the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission and made my amendment in order.

Nevertheless, I am pleased that the State minimum section in this bill is a significant improvement over current law by being much smaller, and I hope that when we enter into conference with the other body, we remain firm and fight to keep State minimums at the lowest possible level so that the risk-based funds can be kept at the highest level to fight the real threat of terrorism in our country.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. COX).

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, following on the remarks by my colleague from New York, who has been a strong supporter of reform in this area, I just want to correct a statement that he made. He suggested that this legislation violates the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. In fact, the 9/11 Commission has expressly endorsed this legislation in precisely the form that it is coming to the floor today and the cochairman, Lee Hamilton, of the 9/11 Commission took the time to come to the Committee on Homeland Security just a few days ago to testify in solid support of this legislation.

And so as we go forward with the bill, I just want the Members to know that this bill in its present form is strongly

endorsed by the 9/11 Commission, and it implements their recommendation.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN).

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act. It is a testament to the importance and balanced approach of this bill that it is cosponsored by every Democratic and Republican member of the Committee on Homeland Security on which I am proud to serve. The 9/11 Commission and countless others have urged a more risk-based approach to homeland security funding. Unfortunately, we have been too slow to adopt this recommendation because, while we may agree on a risk-based method in theory, every Member wants his or her district to receive the most possible Federal assistance.

This bill takes the right approach and represents a long overdue move towards a more effective allocation of scarce resources. H.R. 1544 guarantees a minimum funding level for each State because all States must attain a benchmark level of preparedness and response capabilities. But beyond this minimum, the bill would disburse funds based on a risk and threat assessment to ensure that they are spent where they are most needed and will do the most good.

I am also pleased that this measure provides for a task force on terrorism preparedness to assist in updating the DHS list of essential capabilities for first responders. We must be able to measure the progress our States are making towards an adequate level of preparedness, and it is equally important that this baseline be achieved in every community throughout the country so that American families can feel secure no matter where they live.

I would like to note that for risk-based funding to work, however, DHS must have a comprehensive threat and vulnerability assessment on which to rely. I would urge DHS in the strongest possible terms to ensure that this critical piece of the puzzle is a top priority and is completed as soon as possible.

With that, Mr. Speaker, let me encourage all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan measure. I want to commend both Chairman Cox and Ranking Member THOMPSON on their fine work on this piece of legislation.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER), chairman of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Nuclear and Biological Attack.

Mr. LINDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) for yielding me the time, and I rise in support of both the rule and the underlying legislation, H.R. 1544.

In 1787, John Jay wrote, "Among the many objects to which a wise and free

people find it necessary to direct their attention, that of providing for their safety seems to be the first." More than 215 years later, we all agree on the importance of protecting the people. However, this House today finds itself debating the question of just how best should the government protect the people.

In 2001, Congress enacted many sweeping changes to our Nation's anti-terrorism laws, including the formulas by which States would receive homeland security grants through the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act. Under the PATRIOT Act, each State is guaranteed to receive three-quarters of a percent and each territory .25 percent of the total amount appropriated each year for terrorism preparedness grants. The balance of the funds is then distributed to each State and territory based on population.

In hindsight, we can see that this system of allocation is flawed. For example, in fiscal year 2005, the minimum allocation for each State is \$11.25 million. Using that total, based on current census numbers, the State of Wyoming would receive a minimum guarantee of \$22.23 per person in homeland security grants while the State of California would receive a minimum guarantee of just 31 cents per person. In other words, the Federal Government would allocate approximately 7,100 percent more funding per capita at a minimum to the State of Wyoming than it would to the State of California for homeland security grants.

That is why I am a cosponsor of H.R. 1544 and voted to support the bill in committee. It is the responsibility of this government not only to ensure that we are protecting the people but also to ensure that we do so in an efficient and measured fashion.

Let us be clear about one point. H.R. 1544 does not eliminate minimum guarantees for the States. Under this legislation, each State, regardless of population, would receive a minimum of .25 percent of the total amount appropriated each year for terrorism preparedness grants.

H.R. 1544, however, does require the government to move away from its arbitrary approach to anti-terrorism funding toward a more rational approach. Rather than continuing to simply allow homeland security grant programs to become Federal cash cows for States and localities, this legislation focuses our efforts on what is truly important, namely, our Nation's vulnerabilities.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I look forward to hearing the debate on this legislation to improve first responder funding. We all want to ensure our communities are well equipped and prepared to face any threat. I believe that the underlying bill will help accomplish exactly that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from California for her work on this bill today. I would also like to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), from the Committee on Homeland Security; as well as the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Science, and Technology; and the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for all of their hard work and determination in bringing this bill forward. They worked well together. This is a bipartisan bill.

The Rules Committee met just several days ago and heard how the ranking member and Chairman COX put a great work package together. The Rules Committee decided to help out a little bit. We have made in order with this rule three Democrat amendments and two Republican amendments that will be part of this wonderful bill that will be debated in just a few minutes here in this House. I am very proud of the work that we have accomplished together. I am very proud of the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1544.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

FASTER AND SMARTER FUNDING FOR FIRST RESPONDERS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 269 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1544.

□ 1127

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1544) to provide faster and smarter funding for first responders, and for other purposes, with Mr. CALVERT in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COX).

Mr. COX. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1544, the Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act. I am here on the floor today with the ranking member of the Committee on Homeland Security, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON). He and I are here to argue today on behalf of a bill that is strongly endorsed by every single Republican and Democratic member of the Committee on Homeland Security. More than that, this legislation is supported by the Bush administration. We have received a formal statement of administration support for this bill. It is strongly endorsed by the 9/11 Commission whose recommendation that first responder funding be placed on a risk basis this bill implements. It is endorsed by scores of first responder groups, the men and women on the front lines for whom this money is intended. They worked with us over a period of over 2 years, first to identify the problems in the current grant-making system for billions of homeland security and terrorism preparedness dollars and, second, to develop a solution.

The solution that today's bill presents is a simple one. We are going to move away from political formulas for allocating these billions of dollars and toward a system that relies on the intelligence that the American taxpayer already purchases at the price of billions of dollars every year, information about terrorist capabilities and intentions, information about our own critical infrastructure and vulnerabilities and information about the potential consequences of different kinds of terrorist attacks. In combination, this mix of threat, vulnerability and consequence is called risk. Funding for first responders in the future is going to be based upon risk. That is what this bill is all about.

And we solve the second problem. Of the over \$30 billion in terrorism preparedness moneys that the Federal Government has made available to States and localities since September 11, some 60 percent of it is not yet spent. It is stuck in the administrative pipeline.

□ 1130

There are a number of reasons for this that our committee has discovered through field hearings across the country, hearings here in Washington, and our own investigation. But at bottom it is this: right now there is an "ad hockery" to the way that moneys are passed around the country. There is no predictability about when the funds might arrive, whether reimbursement will be there. And the planning, as a result, tends to take place after the money is received, slowing things down.

In our new system, the planning will be moved at the front end of the process. Every State which already has a

statewide terrorism preparedness plan will ensure that when these applications for grants are made, they are directly tied to that statewide plan and also directly tied to the achievement of national objectives for first responder preparedness.

We will have clear standards for the first responders so that they will not have these kinds of questions about reimbursement that have plagued them in the past. We will know that what we are buying in the form of equipment and training will be directly tied to national terrorism preparedness goals.

In recent days, there has been a fair amount of press coverage about abuses of homeland security spending. For example, right here in Washington, D.C., we learned that \$100,000 of this grant money meant for first responder terrorism preparedness was instead spent on a Dale Carnegie course for sanitation workers, another \$100,000 was spent to develop a rap song purportedly to educate young people about how to be prepared in the case of a terrorist attack.

These kinds of abuses will come to an end as a result of this legislation, and our money will be directed toward keeping our first responders, who are not only first in line to protect us but first in line for the terrorists, the first to die if this system does not work right, keeping these people well trained and well equipped.

I would like to thank, in addition to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), ranking member, the other members of the Committee on Homeland Security. There has been a great deal of work that has gone into this bill. The last step in bringing this to the floor was a 13-hour markup in our committee. I think what we will find today, Mr. Chairman, is that this debate will go forward in a very bipartisan fashion. We might not agree about all the details of this legislation. We may not agree when we go to conference with the Senate. And when we come back with a conference report, hopefully in just a few weeks or maybe a few months, we may not agree on every detail.

But there is a big change in this bill that we all agree on, and that is that henceforth moneys for terrorism preparedness that go from Washington to States and localities to our police, to our firefighters, to our EMS personnel, to people in hospitals who will be there in case of a biological attack or indeed to treat the wounded in case of any attack, that the people who get these moneys will be assured that, first, the moneys will arrive soon, on time, right after we want them to be available; and, second, they will know how to spend it and they will know, when they spend it in accordance with their plans, they will get reimbursed for it. This will move America in the direction that we need to go to be prepared for another terrorist attack.

A great deal of our work in the Committee on Homeland Security is focused on preventing terrorist attacks,